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May to govern 'with humility' after Queen gives assent to leaner legislative programme

# Corbyn vows to vote down Tory austerity plans

#### **Heather Stewart Henry McDonald**

Jeremy Corbyn said Labour is a "government in waiting" yesterday as he criticised Theresa May over the loss of her parliamentary majority and promised to vote down unpopular austerity measures. The Labour leader was warmly cheered

from his packed benches as he responded to a slimmed down Queen's speech setting out a legislative programme dominated by Brexit and stripped of a series of controversial manifesto policies.

He called May's minority administration, "a government without a majority, without a mandate, without a serious legislative programme, led by a prime minister who has lost her political authority and is struggling to stitch together a deal to stay in office"

May said the election "showed that, as we face the big challenges of our future, our country is divided: red versus blue, young versus old, leave versus remain.. the test for all of us is whether we choose to reflect divisions or help the country overcome them. With humility and resolve, this government will seek to do

The Queen had set out the 27 bills the government intends to pass in what the prime minister hopes will be a two-year session of parliament. Eight were pieces of legislation the government believes are necessary for Brexit - including bills allowing Britain to determine its own immigration, customs and trade arrangements.

Plans to scrap free school meals, ration winter fuel payments for pensioners, repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, and introduce what became known as the "dementia tax" for social care have been swept away by the election result. Grammar schools were not mentioned, nor was the promised free vote on foxhunting.

The fragility of May's position was further underlined as it emerged that her director of policy, John Godfrey, had left No 10 - the latest in a string of departures by powerful figures since the election. The PM was forced to sacrifice her two chiefs of staff, Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy, amid widespread complaints from cabinet colleagues about their controlling manage ment style and poor judgment.

The chancellor, Philip Hammond, has publicly criticised the conduct of the campaign in a swipe against May and her team, insisting jobs and the economy must come first as the government negotiates Brexit.

The Queen's speech included a series of pro-consumer measures the government hopes will command popular support among MPs, including a surprise pledge that tenants will not have to pay more than one month's rent as a deposit

But May appeared to back away from plans to cap energy bills for 17m families on the worst-value tariffs. A spokesman said the government was still committed to tackling the worst rip-off price rises, and was discussing with the regulator Ofgem the best way to achieve that.

With May yet to conclude the "confidence and supply" deal with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist party that she hopes will commit them to supporting her on key measures, Corbyn made clear Labour was preparing to fight the government, vote by vote. "We will use every opportunity to vote down government policies that failed to win public support and we will use every opportunity to win

Number of bills set

out in the Queen's

speech. Unpopular

dementia tax were

plans such as the

quietly dropped

support for our programme," he said. The Queen was accompanied by the Prince of Wales to the ceremony in the House of Lords, after Buckingham Palace announced the Duke of Edinburgh had

been admitted to hospital as a precaution. May's spokesman stressed that the gov Number of pieces ernment will reflect on the election result, and underlined the fact that whichever of legislation about manifesto measures make it into law will Brexit, including depend on the balance of support among **bills to control** MPs. "Broadly, it is about governing with **trade, customs** humility, and you also have to bear in and immigration

guest list, **Trump off** 

The Queen's speech did not mention a planned state visit by Donald Trump to the UK, apparently confirming that it

The speech usually mentions state visits planned for the duration of the parliament. The Queen said she and Prince Philip "look forward to welcoming their majesties King Felipe and Queen Letizia of Spain on a state visit in July". She did not mention a visit by Trump initially planned for this summer. Theresa May invited him on behalf of the Queen when she visited the White House in January.

The Guardian reported earlier this month that Trump told May in a phone call that he did not want to go ahead with the state visit until the British public supported it. The White House said the subject "never came up on the call". Downing Street has refused to comment, saying only that the invitation remained unchanged.

herald a parliament lasting two years, indicating no date for Trump's visit has been scheduled for the near future.

the deputy White House press secretary, denied that the lack of mention of Trump's visit indicated that it had been cancelled. "That is not what she said. She only talked about visits with confirmed dates and we do not yet have a confirmed date," she said.

The visit would be controversial, given Trump's policies and provocative use of social media, such as when he misquoted and berated the London mayor, Sadiq Khan, after the London Bridge attack. Various groups have promised to protest if the visit

**Peter Walker** 

mind bringing forward measures which can command a majority in parliament." May, who began her term last July by sacking a series of high-profile colleagues, including George Osborne and Nicky Morgan, and embarking on a controversial command all colleagues' backing.

Corbyn insisted: "Labour is not merely an opposition: we are a government in waiting, with a policy programme that

Alan Travis enthused and engaged millions of people, many for the first time. We are ready to offer real strong and stable leadership in the interests of the many not the few. And we will test this government's Brexit strategy, and what legislation comes forward, against that standard.

Tory sources said talks with the DUP were continuing. DUP and airline sources in Northern Ireland confirmed that one **Dropped** issue on the agenda is the abolition or Theresa May's electorally explosive radical slashing of air passenger duty. All three of the region's airports - Belfast International, George Best Belfast City Airport and City of Derry Airport - have to complete with Dublin Airport. The duty has been abolished in the Irish Republic. Airline industry sources believe the total abolition of APD would bring a mil-

lion new passengers through local airports and create more than 1,000 new jobs. The DUP is also expected to secure increased investment in infrastructure in Northern Ireland as a result of the negotiations, and has pledged to use its leverage to soften the impact of austerity policies

on the UK as a whole. During May's speech, Labour MPs heckled the prime minister with shouts of resign". Labour's Kevin Brennan called May the "interim prime minister", asking state visit this autumn. Officials say how she could negotiate Brexit with the EU if she could not clinch a confidence and supply agreement with 10 DUP MPs Kept to acquire a majority.

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# Key bills - and what drive to expand grammars, struck a conciliatory note, conscious of the need to May has dropped

Home affairs editor

The most controversial elements of the Tory election manifesto, including social care, new grammar schools and lifting the ban on foxhunting, were absent from the 27 bills and draft bills that made up the Queen's speech.

proposals on social care costs were postponed, with the door left open to future legislation after the promised consultation within two years. Also apparently dropped were legislation to abolish the independent Serious Fraud Office and a bill to implement what were once Michael Gove's high-profile prison reform plans. The prime minister's personal drive against extremism was also postponed, with the possibility of immediate flagship legislation replaced by a further counter-terrorism review, and her promised new commission to counter extremism was relegated to a

"non-legislative measure". The king of Spain's state visit in July got a mention but there was not a word on Donald Trump's previously billed that is because no date has been fixed.

At the heart of what remains were eight Brexit bills and a series of measures, including on electric cars, the next phase

of the HS2 high-speed train project, developing commercial satellites and extending smart metering, to provide a modernising flavour. The digital world is to see a new personal data regime ncluding a "right to be forgotten" law

cYanmaGentaYellowblack

**Brexit** The eight Brexit bills were as expected. Downing Street said the repeal bill "won't put any constraints on the withdrawal agreement we will make", which crucially leaves open the door to any type of Brexit, whether hard or soft. The repeal bill lost the "great" prefix in its title and will incorporate into UK domestic law all EU laws that apply at

the point of Britain's exit. The Brexit bills will include separate trade and customs bills, with the latter including powers to impose a separate British VAT and excise regime on exit, agriculture and fisheries bills and new

'EU hat' is star of the show As she opened parliament and laid out the government's intention to deliver the bills necessary for Brexit, the Queen - previously alleged by some to be a Brexiter - wore a hat that bore a strong resemblance to the EU flag.

The hat was glorious. A shade of

papal purple with yellow flowers, she wore it with a matching day coat and dress in a print not a world away from Balenciaga's spring/summer 2017 inkjet floral print dress. Jolly, informal - was it deeply coded or simply Instagram-friendly? Was she referencing the Brexit negotiations or Van Gogh's The Starry Night? Is this royal purple or Lanvin lilac? Given the Queen's compulsory nonpartisan role, the hat will remain riddled with ambiguity. In a pared-down ceremony (the first since 1974), the Queen arrived in a car rather

than a carriage. But still, her

crown had its own car, too.

Iorwenna Ferrier

national laws on nuclear safeguards and international sanctions. The immigration bill will repeal EU law on free movement but also make the migration of EU nationals and their families subject to UK law. This is likely to affect their rights to bring spouses to live in Britain.

Citizens

There was a citizens' rights theme through the Queen's speech, bringing together the energy price cap - albeit in a weaker form as a non-legislative measure, a draft bill to improve victims rights in the criminal justice system and a delayed draft measure on unfair tenants' fees and to help reduce car insurance premiums. The previous prisons and courts bill, which was to have been carried over from the previous parliament, was halved, with the penal reform element dropped.

Non-legislative measures

The promised public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire, the adoption of a Hillsborough-style public advocate for bereaved families, mental health reform, a new drive for technical education including new T-levels, and moves to tackle the gender pay gap were classed as "non-legislative measures"; perhaps indicating a reduction in the

scale of ambition On the Grenfell Tower inquiry, there was a commitments to consulting residents over its terms. There was also a pledge to create a new "civil disaster reaction taskforce" in recognition of the chaotic immediate response of the authorities. But ministers only promised to "assess the position on building regulations" in light of the inquiry.

A "digital charter" held out the prospect of making the UK "the safest place to be online", with a promise to tackle "harmful content online" whether it is extremist, abusive or harmful to children

John Crace's sketch A 20-minute delay on the way to Ascot

as a cleaner

May, the PM's

Theresa May and

ieen's speech

he crown wasn't at all happy. Normally it got to sit on the Queen's head; now it was made to ride in a separate limo. The Queen also didn't look best pleased by the lack of pursuivants, heralds and ladies of the bedchamber. Her expression never rose above the miserable throughout. Still, at least she was able to make a statement of sorts by wearing a hat in the shape of an EU flag Suck on that, Maybot. There were even empty seats in the Lords. A threadbare state opening of parliament for a

threadbare government. It was all done and dusted in little more than 20 minutes. The longest part was the wait for Black Rod to summon all the MPs from the Commons. Her Majesty looked up briefly to check the body language between the Maybot and Jeremy Corbyn. Not good. Come to think of it, the sexual chemistry between the Maybot and her own party wasn't much better.

The lord chancellor handed the Queen a copy of the speech. Brenda flicked through the largely blank pages with distaste and disbelief. Was this all the Maybot could come up with after delaying the state opening by a couple of days. "My government will..." she began, her eyes beginning to close. It turned out that what her govern-

ment would be doing most of was dumping large parts of the manifesto on which it had been elected. Out with grammar schools, out with scrapping free school meals and the winter fuel allowance, out with the dementia tax,

out with energy price caps. Damn it, the | Perhaps the Tories' Richard Benyon Maybot was even reneging on her promise to reinstate fox hunting. That was the one bit of the speech the Queen had

actually been looking forward to. After limping her way through a series of vague commitments on Brexit along with a promise to unite the country - good luck with that one, she thought, you can't even unite your own party - Brenda hit the home straight. "My government is committed to...". To scraping the barrel with a whole load of vague promises. "It's almost enough to make one want to abdicate," the Queen muttered to Prince Charles, who was standing in for the unwell Duke of Edinburgh, on the way out.

"Great idea, Mummy," said the Prince of Wales, his ears perking up. "Only joking. Let's fawk awf to

With the Queen safely at the races, the Commons reconvened two hours later to debate. As is customary, proceedings began with two speeches from backbenchers. As isn't so usual, these were neither sparkling nor witty.

Desperation greeted the Maybot from the Tories. A primal scream of despair

When Labour MPs pointed out that the election hadn't actually gone that well for her and she couldn't do a deal with the DUP, never mind EU27, her memory files crashed. "I won, I won," she cried. The expressions on those around her suggested otherwise. Freewheelin' Phil grimaced. Boris yawned.

# Commons Labour cheers drown out muted May

#### Peter Walker and Jessica Elgot

Theresa May's muted reception in the House of Commons after the Queen's speech drew sharp contrast with the roars of approval from opposition benches for Jeremy Corbyn, though Tory MPs tore into the Labour leader for the party's position

The tone in the House of Commons after the Queen's speech chimed with the changing balance of power in the chamber, with a low-key prime minister repeatedly giving way for contributions from others and apologising for the government's response to the Grenfell Tower fire

May said the official response to the west London blaze, which killed at least 79 people, was not good enough. "As prime ninister I apologise for that failure, and I've taken responsibility for doing what we can to put things right," she said.

Corbyn, in contrast, was more loudly cheered by his backbenchers than was usual before the election, who saw him castigate what be called "a government that has lost its majority and run out of ideas altogether".

Corbyn's speech, which lasted over half an hour during the debate following the Queen's speech, saw him call repeatedly for an end to austerity, and higher public sector pay, and to present his party as

### 'As prime minister I've taken responsibility to put things right' Theresa May

'a government in waiting". While at times mocking May - several times he referred to lengthy talks with the Democratic Unionists as a "coalition of chaos" - Corbyn also took interventions from several Labour MPs to discuss fire safety in tower blocks in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire. Conservative backbenchers shouted at him to take more

Those who were given a chance to speak tackled Corbyn on his party's attitude to Brexit, challenging the party to rule out a second referendum which the Labour leader said he had already done.

During May's speech, Labour MPs neckled the prime minister with shouts

Labour's Kevin Brennan called May the 'interim prime minister" and asked how the prime minister could negotiate Brexit with the EU if she could not clinch a confidence and supply agreement with 10 DUP

MPs to acquire a majority Though he took far fewer interventions, Corbyn was also disrupted by opposition backbenchers, including Conservative Jacob Rees-Mogg who raised a point of order with Speaker John Bercow about

the length of the Labour leader's speech "He said about ten minutes ago 'in conclusion ...'," Rees-Mogg joked. "I fear as time goes past he may be in danger of inadvertently having misled the House." Bercow dismissed Rees-Mogg's jibe.

## **Unbowed**

and Kwasi Kwarteng had decided it was

Jeremy Corbyn stood up and paused.

So many open goals, so little time. He

opted to begin on a serious note with

the Grenfell Tower fire and the terror

was not a little unusual not to imple-

This was a new, energised and

empowered Corbyn and the Tories

didn't quite know how to react to him.

a joke; now they were being forced to

accept he was a possible future prime

much. Corbyn did ramble a bit towards

are shaping up, there's going to be a lot

of days in parliament when he gets the

better of the exchanges. Without even

There was a desperation to the roar

that greeted the Maybot from the Tory

The Maybot only confirmed their fears.

After an OK start, she just went back to

her tried and tested method of saying

nothing of any meaning till everyone

tuned out. Maybots are as Maybots do.

Their time would come.

benches. A primal scream of despair.

needing to be particularly good.

minister. They didn't seem to like it

the end, but you can't blame him for

getting carried away. The way things

For years they had been treating him as

attacks, before going on to wonder if it

ment any of the key manifesto promises

more appropriate to live down to the

occasion and keep things dismal.



Jeremy Corbyn snubbed the Queen by not bowing to her. Footage showed officials bowing in unison, along with Theresa May. Corbyn does not join in, along with other MPs immediately

A source in Corbyn's team said it was May who breached the tradition that only officials should bow. "It was not any sort of snub - he was following the protocol," the source said. Footage of the 2016 and 2015 state openings of parliament show David Cameron did

not bow either. Meanwhile, Dennis Skinner (above) urged MPs during proceedings to get their "skates on" so the Queen could get off to Royal Ascot. "Get your skates on, the first race is half past two," he quipped. Peter Walker

